

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 13748 131122Z

17
ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13748

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE: LAST MINUTE TRUCE FASHIONED

REF: TOKYO 13688

SUMMARY. ELEVENTH HOUR COMPROMISE AMONG LDP LEADERS
AVERTED CABINET SHOWDOWN OVER CONVOCAION OF EXTRA-
ORDINARY DIET SESSION--AND CONCEIVABLE CONSERVATIVE
SPLIT. AS A RESULT, MIKI WILL PROMISE OFFICIAL LDP CAU-
CUS NOT TO DISSOLVE DIET "SO LONG AS DISCUSSION ON
TRACK" AND HIS OPPONENTS HAVE AGREED TO HIS DESIRED
SEPTEMBER 16 OPENING OF DIET. AGREEMENT ALSO SETS
STAGE FOR SEPTEMBER 14 MIKI SHUFFLE OF CABINET AND TOP
LDP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. (PROSPECTS ARE REASONABLY
GOOD FOR FINMIN OHIRA, FONMIN MIYAZAWA AND JDA CHIEF
SAKATA TO RETAIN THEIR POSITIONS.) IN REACHING COMPROMISE,
BOTH SIDES PUSHED BARGAINING TO BRINK WITH MIKI
OPPONENTS PROBABLY RECEIVING ALL THEY COULD REASONABLY EXPECT.

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 13748 131122Z

BUT MIKI'S PLEDGE NOT TO DISSOLVE DIET WAS NOT ABSOLUTE

AND HE GAVE NO HINT OF HIS POST-DIET INTENTIONS. WE HAVE, IN SHORT, ONLY TEMPORARY TRUCE IN ON-GOING LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE WITH NEW OCCASIONS FOR CONTROVERSY ALREADY IN SIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 11, PRIMIN MIKI, LDP SECGEN NAKASONE, AND ANTI-MIKI REPRESENTATIVES HORI AND FUNADA MET TO AGREE ON THREE-POINT PROPOSAL:

- MIKI WOULD CLARIFY HIS INTENTIONS TO SEPTEMBER 14 OFFICIAL LDP CAUCUS CALLED BY PARTY LEADERSHIP;
- EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONVENTION WOULD BE HELD IN OCTOBER TO DETERMINE PARTY ELECTION POSTURE;
- IN EXCHANGE FOR PROMISE THAT ALL LDP ELEMENTS WOULD COOPERATE IN PASSING IMPORTANT PENDING LEGISLATION, MIKI CONFIRMED HE HAD NO PRESENT THOUGHT OF DIET DISSOLUTION. ON LAST POINT, MIKI EXPECTED TO TELL SEPTEMBER 14 CAUCUS THAT "SO LONG AS DISCUSSION OF IMPORTANT LEGISLATION ON TRACK," HE WILL NOT DISSOLVE DIET. WITH AGREEMENT IN HAND, CABINET MET AT 5 PM SEPTEMBER 11 (MIKI'S DEADLINE) TO APPROVE FORMALLY CONVOCAION OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION SEPTEMBER 16, THUS ENDING LDP LEADERSHIP/CABINET CRISIS WHICH HAD DRAGGED ON FOR MORE THAN A MONTH.

2. WITH COMPROMISE REACHED, UPCOMING POLITICAL SCHEDULE BECAME CONSIDERABLY CLEARER. BASIC ELEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- SEPTEMBER 14: FORMAL PARTY CAUCUS WHERE MIKI WILL MAKE HIS QUALIFIED PLEDGE NOT TO DISSOLVE DIET.
- SAME DAY, IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER: A LARGE SCALE SHUFFLE OF TOP LDP LEADERSHIP AND CABINET POSTS WILL TAKE PLACE. GREATEST INTEREST FOCUSES ON NAKASONE'S REPLACEMENT AS LDP SECGEN, PRIMARILY FOR WHAT IT WILL TELL OF MIKI'S POST-DIET INTENTIONS. A "NEUTRAL," SUCH AS NADAO OR MATSUNO, WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS MIKI'S KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN BEYOND OCTOBER. APPOINTMENT OF A MIKI FACTION MEMBER, SUCH AS KOMOTO OR ISHIDA, WOULD SUGGEST HIS INTENTION DEFINITELY TO HANG ON. ON OTHER HAND, APPOINTMENT OF HORI, FUKUDA OR (MORE LOGICALLY) CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 13748 131122Z

OHIRA MIGHT SIGNAL HIS INTENTION TO STEP DOWN GRACEFULLY.

- SEPTEMBER 16; CONVOCAION OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION. LDP WILL ASK OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR 40-45 DAY SESSION, PROBABLY HOPING TO GET 30. IF SO, SESSION LIKELY ONLY TO TAKE UP SPECIAL FINANCIAL BILLS (NOT INCLUDING PRICE HIKE PROPOSALS FOR RAILWAYS, TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH) AND LOCKHEED.

--LATTER HALF OF OCTOBER: EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONVENTION WITH DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT BY MIKI AND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE YET TO BE NAMED.

--LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER: ELECTION DAY? BASED ON TIMING OF PARTY CONVENTION AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EMPEROR'S ACCESSION NOVEMBER 10, SPECULATION INCREASINGLY FOCUSES ON DECEMBER 5 AS ELECTION DATE.

3. COMMENT. ELEVENTH HOUR COMPROMISE WAS REACHED AFTER BOTH SIDES HAD PUSHED BARGAINING TO BRINK. EMOTIONAL PITCH ON BOTH SIDES WAS SUCH THAT THERE WAS REAL POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN OR MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH COULD HAVE LED TO RESULTS NEITHER SIDE WANTED. MIKI CHALLENGERS, ALTHOUGH DISAPPOINTED IN PART, PROBABLY GOT AS MUCH AS THEY COULD REASONABLY EXPECT. BUT THERE WAS NO ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE THAT MIKI WOULD NOT DISSOLVE DIET EVEN DURING UPCOMING DIET SESSION, IF ARTIFICIALLY IMPOSED LDP UNITY BREAKS DOWN. MORE IMPORTANT, HE MADE NO COMMITMENT ON WHETHER OR WHEN HE WILL STEP DOWN AS PRIME MINISTER. MANY EXPECT HE WILL CHOOSE TO STEP DOWN AT TIME OF OCTOBER LDP CONVENTION, BUT THAT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR AND, EVEN IF HE WERE REPLACED AS LDP PRESIDENT, HE COULD STILL DISSOLVE DIET THEREAFTER IN HIS PRIME MINISTERIAL ROLE.

4. IN SHORT, WHAT WE HAVE IS TEMPORARY TRUCE AMONG CONSERVATIVES PROMPTED BY FEAR OF PARTY SPLIT, BUT LEAVING LEGACY OF UNUSUAL FRUSTRATION AND MISTRUST ON BOTH SIDES. MOREOVER, THERE ARE EVENTS IN PROSPECTS WHICH COULD STRAIN LDP UNITY AT BEST OF TIMES: CABINET/LDP LEADERSHIP SHUFFLE ITSELF; HANDLING OF LOCKHEED SCANDAL'S CONCLUSION, PARTICULARLY QUESTION OF DISCLOSURE OF UNINDICTABLES; AND DIET TACTICS IN WHAT PROMISES TO BE DIFFICULT SESSION. FINALLY, THERE IS EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 TOKYO 13748 131122Z

CONVENTION WHERE MIKI WILL FACE ONCE AGAIN CHOICE OF WHETHER TO EXIT GRACEFULLY TO SCATTERED CONSERVATIVE APPLAUSE OR STAY ON TO PRESIDE OVER PEOPLE'S (ELECTION) VERDICT ON LOCKHEED, AS HE HAS RECENTLY PROMISED. BECAUSE OF THIS UNCERTAINTY, MIKI'S EVERY WORD AND ACTION, BEGINNING WITH TOMORROW'S CABINET SHUFFLE, WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED FOR ANY HINT OF HIS REAL INTENTIONS. SHOESMITH

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